

The Times-Picayune

Issued Every Morning by The Times-Picayune Publishing Corp. at
3800 Howard Ave., New Orleans, La. 70140

ASHTON PHELPS

President and Publisher

Editor

ED TUNSTALL
FRITZ HARSDORFF
MALCOLM FORSYTH

Associate Editor, News
Associate Editor, Editorials

Hold Off on Barriers

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved unwisely when it let a \$5.2 million contract last month to begin work on the controversial barrier structures of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Plan. The Corps compounded its mistake Monday when it began work on the first phase of the barriers.

The barrier concept does not have the support of the public and never did. The Orleans Levee Board tricked the public — urging them to vote for a three-mill tax while assuring them no portion of the tax would be used on the barrier structures. Shortly after the tax was approved, it was learned that the Levee Board, with the help of F. Edward Hebert, had found a way to use the money for the barriers.

Suits against the project have been filed by St. Tammany Parish and Save Our Wetlands Inc. It may well be that the courts will call a halt to the project on various environmental and economic grounds. In that event, whatever money the Corps has spent will be wasted tax dollars and whatever construction has been completed will be wasted work that will have to be undone.

Regardless of who wins the va-

cant First Congressional District seat, the congressman for the "barrier district" will oppose the construction. Both Ron Faucheux and Robert Livingston have come out in opposition to the barriers.

One of the complaints against the project is that it will impede easy passage of commercial and pleasure craft through the Chef Menteur and Rigolets passes. But there are other more important complaints.

There is no proof that the barriers will work to reduce hurricane damage, or that alternatives are not better. Models at the Corps' Experiment Station at Vicksburg say barriers will work, but these models have been wrong before. Little or nothing is known about the effect barriers across the passes will have on water exchange and the migration of fish and crustaceans. Since the openings in these passes will be narrowed by the barrier structures, an increase in flow velocity will result. No one knows what effect this will have.

Until studies are done to prove that the barriers will have no adverse environmental effect on the ecology of the lake, no construction should take place. The Corps should cease and desist — now.

EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

P. O. BOX 60267

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160



IN REPLY REFER TO
LMNPA

18 July 1977

Mr. Ed Tunstall
Editor
Times-Picayune
3800 Howard Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70140

Dear Mr. Tunstall:

I will not attempt to respond to all of the many unsupported statements which are contained in your July 14 editorial, "Hold Off on Barriers," but the statement, "There is no proof that the barriers will work to reduce hurricane damage..." is so outrageously in error as to require an answer.

The idea of protection through barriers is not a new, untried concept. Such barriers are already in existence and functioning effectively in many locations around the world. To wit: Stamford Harbor, Connecticut; New Bedford, Massachusetts; Providence, Rhode Island; and Veerse Gat, Harlingvliet, and Brouwershavense in Holland. Others are under construction in Jamaica Bay, New York, the Thames estuary in London, England, and the Oosterschelde estuary in Holland.

It is not the "Models at...Vicksburg [which] say barriers will work..." rather it is the history of the works referred to above which objectively demonstrate it. One can but wonder how much research went into the drafting of the editorial.

EARLY J. RUSH III
Colonel, CE
District Engineer

**DO NOT WRITE ON THIS COVER AS IT IS INTENDED FOR RE-USE
RETURN IT WITH THE FILE COPIES TO ORIGINATING OFFICE**